

CLAIMS

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1. A process for forming tube-shaped hollow bodies (10) made of metal, particularly made of aluminum, with, after shaping of a slab-shaped semifinished product into a closed cross-sectional profile and straight seam welding of the opposing edges of the semifinished product, the tube-shaped hollow body formed being soft annealed and finally hydroformed in a die (14) by a medium introduced into the hollow body (10), characterized in that the tube-shaped hollow body (10) is first mechanically partially expanded and/or mechanically partially reduced in an upstream processing phase and is subsequently soft annealed.
2. The process according to claim 1, characterized in that the processing phases of mechanical partial expansion and/or mechanical partial reduction and subsequent soft annealing are performed multiple times in sequence.
3. The process according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the tube-shaped hollow body (10) is also soft annealed before the upstream processing phase.
4. The process according to one of the claims 1 to 3, characterized in that the partial expansion and/or reduction of the tube-shaped hollow body is performed at those points at which the largest alteration of the cross-section after hydroforming relative to the initial cross-section occurs.

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5. The process according to one of the claims 1 to 4, characterized in that further processing phases, such as mechanical bending and mechanical shaping, are performed between the processing phases of soft annealing and hydroforming.

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